

The Bloomfield Gazette.

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Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one, have oftentimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men; Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.—COWPER.

FORTNIGHTLY.

VOL. I. NO. 6.

FIVE CENTS.

FOR THE BLOOMFIELD GAZETTE.

Falling Leaves.

Over in the woods where the shadows are waving,
The leaves of the summer are falling to-day;
The quiet states of the forest paring
With the golden splendor of their decay.

In the past they were dyed with the blood of the
slain.

Who had fallen for the land's salvation,
And whose deeds are repeated again and again,
And will live in the heart of the nation.

Now the autumn comes to a peaceful land,
But still the shadow lingers;
In many a home there's a broken hand
Which has felt war's cruel finger.

The leaves are falling on new-made graves
That are scattered far and wide;
That are made where softly the willows wave,
In the valley and by the hill-side.

We watch them one by one—
How slowly they flutter down!
How brightly they glisten in the sun!
Yet, we sigh when they reach the ground.

We are sad to think such a beautiful thing
Must wither, and fade, and perish;
But we know that others will come in the spring,
That we may as fondly cherish.

The leaves are like leaves on "the Tree of Life,"
That we gather, and gather, and love,
Till they are dashed from our quivering hearts
away.

By the hand of "Our Father" above.

Bloomfield, October, 1872.

FOR THE BLOOMFIELD GAZETTE.

TOMPKINS STORIES.

No. VI.

JESSE AND MARGARET:
A STORY OF MOUNTAIN LIFE.

NEARLY a year had rolled round since Mr. Tompkins had gathered his children around him in the evening for their entertainment. His rule had been, during long winter nights, to occupy one evening each week in narrating such incidents in his early life as he thought might interest them; and this generally lasted some six or eight weeks in mid-winter. The days had now contracted to their shortest length, and the winter's cold had become fairly established. The ponds and brooks were frozen over hard, and the ground was covered with snow, so that, however, the larger boys might enjoy a few hours in active sport out of doors during the day, and even the girls and little ones seemed quite ready for sleigh rides, yet all admitted that of a cold winter's evening there was no place so comfortable as around a bright, glowing fire in the house.

"Well, now, dear papa," said Henry, a youth of fifteen, "do tell us a real winter story." "And what do you mean?" inquired Mr. Tompkins, "by a real winter story?" "Why," replied Jimmie, an intelligent boy of thirteen, "I should think any one would know what that means—a story that happened in the winter, when it was cold and snowy, like it is now. Isn't that it, Hen?" "Yes, certainly; that's just what I mean," answered Henry.

"But," said Mr. Tompkins, "I should think a summer story would be more interesting in winter, to divest our minds from the drear and rigors of this inclement season. Pleasure and delight are excited in us quite as much by contrasting opposite things as by studying those which are similar to each other. Don't you remember, for instance, how much more interesting and almost refreshing it is in a hot summer's day to look upon a picture representing a winter's landscape, with its snow-hills and sleigh rides, its ice-covered lakes and expert skaters? And so, is it not more agreeable in cold winter, when you hardly know how to keep warm, to be reminded of the delights of summer by looking upon a painting of a summer landscape, with its wide-spreading shade trees, green fields, cows and sheep in the pasture, ducks and geese in the water, men and boys without coats in the hay meadow, frolicsome girls in light dresses and straw bloomers?"

"Our minds, my dear children, as well as our bodies, require changeful variety, and sometimes rest. However," continued Mr. Tompkins, "as I must tell all my stories during the long evenings of winter, I have no objection to gratify Henry's request to-night."

"Papa's very kind," said little Harriet, who had her accustomed place on her father's knee.

After a little pause, during which he lifted his finger to the side of his nose, according to his habit, when trying to remember. "Let me see," said he, "did I ever tell you about the man that was frozen to death in the mountains one winter when he would go home to see his family in spite of the mountain storm? I believe not. Well, I guess I must tell you that to-night."

"Yes, no," papa," exclaimed all the children.

"That was a sad time," said the grandmother, from her seat by the table; "I remember it all." So Mr. Tompkins commenced:

"I will call my story," said he, "Jesse and Margaret; a Story of Mountain Life. Jesse Conklin lived in a small cabin, or log hut, in a sequestered valley far up among the mountains of Rockland, near the same place he was born and raised, as the country phrase has it. His father

BLOOMFIELD, N. J., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1872.

and mother had both died many years before this narrative begins, leaving to this son all they had to bestow, which were poverty and ignorance. Few and simple were the wants of those mountain people, but the necessity of depending on their daily labor for what they did have, taught them self-reliance, and made them hardy.

she strove to dismiss the idle fears, and fortifying herself with reflections on God's mercy and goodness, she strove to exhibit a cheerful confidence. The last conjugal embrace, the last paternal kiss were given, the last, the final adieu spoken, and Jesse set out on his long and weary way to the distant scene of his winter's labors.

I need not attempt to describe Margaret's feelings of loneliness when she fully realized that her loved husband was gone not to return as usual, at nightfall. Indeed for many days it required all the philosophy and fortitude she could command to resist the injurious tendency to morbid depression of spirit and heart-ickness. Her thoughts by day and her dreams by night, declared too plainly how hard it was to submit to the trial which Providence had appointed for her.

But as days and weeks passed on, she became more reconciled to her lot; and what with fiddling and milking of the cow, the feeding of her pigs and chickens, the dressing and undressing, the washing and combing of her precious little ones, with the various and numerous household affairs, great and small, not to forget the shovelling of snow paths, often rendered necessary and laborious by the frequent and heavy falls of snow among the mountains, the good woman had quite enough to keep her mind and hands occupied.

After considering the matter for some time, and having resolved what to do, Jesse went to work to make necessary preparations before he should disclose his plans to his wife. One evening, when the supper table was cleared away, and the little ones were in bed and asleep, and Margaret, Jessie's wife, was sitting near him, engaged in sewing or knitting, as usual, the anxious husband addressed her somewhat after this fashion: "My dear Margaret, I've been thinking that I ought to do something this winter that would turn to better account than anything I can do around home. Feeding the cow and pigs and chickens you could do, couldn't you, Maggie, if I were not here? and I've cut and piled up lots of wood—enough to last all winter, I should think—and I've fixed up the cow stable so as to make it comfortable, and I've arranged the pig pen so that it will need very little attention for the whole winter; and the hay, and stalks, and corn, and potatoes, and the rest of the things, are all right. And now, don't you think you could get along, if your Jessie were to go away for the winter?"

Margaret had listened to all Jessie was saying, and her heart beat with apprehension of some undesirable, or at least uncomfortable revelation. When her husband paused after the above question, she dropped her hand upon her lap, and looking right into his face, the big tear in her eye betrayed the emotions which were kindling in her breast.

"And what would I do without you, to talk with all the long evenings of winter, dearest husband?" said Margaret; "and what if little Jessie or Louisa be taken sick? and where would you think of going? and what could you do? Why can't you work here as you did last winter?" and thus, like a woman, she added question to question, without waiting for Jessie to answer one.

"Well, said Jessie, "I know it would be a trial for you, Maggie; it would be hard for me, too, to be long away from the wife of my heart, and the sweet little pet we love so much. But I cannot do as I did last winter, for the scoop timber is all cut hereabout, and I am desirous of making an effort to better our affairs, Maggie. Two of my acquaintances—Joe Conklin and Zeb Brundage—are going over to the Bear Mountain woods, thirty miles away, where they say there is plenty of scoop maple, and they want me to go with them, and we'll make scoops, and bowls, and trays, etc., this winter, as I used to, before the timber was all picked out around here. Now, I want you to be clever and courageous and let me go and see what I can accomplish." A silence of some minutes ensued, during which there was an evident struggle going on in Margaret's breast. Her will conquered her, when, drawing a long sigh, she replied: "Well, if you think it best, Jessie, I will try to get along as well as I can; but will you send me word, now and then, how you are getting on, and also to hear how I and the children do."

"I shall want to, dearest Maggie," said he, "and will wait for opportunity; but it may not be possible. That wood is far off, beyond Snake Swamp, and there is no road, and no travelling most of the way; but I shall try, and if you should have a chance to send word up to Gully Hill, during the winter, don't fail to do it, for I shall continue to hear from there once in a while; and at all events there will likely be opportunity for you at the time of sap running in February; perhaps not till last part of the month, as Dan Johnson sometimes goes out near there to make sugar."

Hiving thus explained his plan, and got the consent of his wife, Jessie soon completed the necessary arrangements, and was ready to start at the time appointed. Jesse and Margaret had never been parted since the happy day that made them man and wife. It is not surprising that the brief time intervening before his departure were days of sorrow to both, more especially to Margaret, whose superstitious or superstitious mind seemed to forebode some impending evil, though she knew not what. Perhaps she apprehended she might never see her Jessie again. But

she strove to dismiss the idle fears, and sometimes making night hideous by their frightful yell. Jessie was weary, stiff and foot-sore, but he would not give up; he knew there were difficulties, and even dangers, but he was not daunted. Nothing could shake his firm resolve to see his beloved wife and children that night.

So, as his companions were minded to stay, Jessie started on alone. But now his progress was necessarily slow. It must have been near to midnight when he arrived at the Old Burnt Saw Mill Bridge, so called from the charred remains of a saw mill that once stood near it, but which was burned down many years before. It was a wild ravine, a mile or two from the nearest dwelling.

Here his fatigues and bewilderment seems to have overcome, or perhaps disheartened, him, for his steps, as traced in the snow next day, indicate unsteadiness of direction and failing strength. Jessie,

on approaching the bridge, diverged from the main road and followed a side-path a short distance down a slight declivity, when he probably suspected his error, and leaned against a clump of saplings or little trees, growing close together, to rest a moment and collect his senses. This seems to have proved a trap to the tired wayfarer. It is supposed that the pliable tree parted under the pressure of the poor man's body, and that he fell between them and was held firmly by their wedge-like embrace, from which he was unable to extricate himself, if indeed he was not so benumbed, bewildered and wayworn, as to be incapable of an effort for his own release. It is even probable that he was not aware of his imminent peril. The delightful visions of home which had buoyed up his spirits hitherto, had become filmy and indistinct; that charming and powerful magnet which had so persistently drawn him on all day, could not, though only three miles distant, overcome the inertia of his physical and mental prostration. But yielding to a drowsiness which always attends such severe exposure and fatigue, he sank at once into a fatal sleep.

The sun was well up next morning, and shining cheerfully, when Jessie's more discreet, at all events, less presumptuous companions, after their much-needed rest at Bush's, set out from the hospitable farmer's, and leisurely proceeded on their way homeward. The snow was several inches deep, and the walking consequently heavy and fatiguing. A little before noon they reached a well-known residence, formerly Farmer Wheeler's, in Diamond Valley, where they were fain to stop and rest again, and learn something of home and neighborhood affairs before they should reach their own domes, now about two miles distant. They first naturally inquired if Jessie Conklin had called—there late the evening before; perhaps it might have been midnight. Being informed that he had not, they expressed amazement that he should have been so infatuated to get home as not even to stop and warm himself a few minutes. "He could not have gone past," said the hired man, who was standing by, "as there were no signs of foot-tracks in the road hereabout when I first went out this morning."

"Well, but may not the falling snow have filled up the track?" asked Brundage. "Oh, no," replied the farmer's man, "it stopped snowing before morning; and besides I am sure old Nero (meaning the watch-dog) would have informed us of his approach, but I have not heard him bark all night. Look yourselves on the road; the snow is smooth everywhere along. No, there has no one passed here since we turned in last night; that's a sure case." Brundage then turned to his companion and said: "Well, Joe, Fin blessed it that isn't mysterious anymore. I remember," said he, "that I didn't see any tracks for a long way back, but I can't tell where they stopped, for I was talking of home so much, and of the big bear we shot down this road last winter, that I didn't think anything about it the last part of the way."

The more intelligent farmer now became anxious, and inquired if he might not have turned off down below and gone up the still water path on the other side of Brundage Mountain? "Oh, no," said Joe, "that would have been longer and rougher, and a much more difficult path of a dark stormy night." "I'm afraid," said Brundage, "he has sat down somewhere to rest and go asleep." "Well," said Mr. Wheeler, "it seems queer at all events, and ought to be looked into at once. I'll let Chickey (meaning his hired man) go back with you; till you find his tracks, and then follow them where they left the road, till you can learn something about him." All were agreed, and off they started immediately, not knowing but they might find poor Jessie in some serious difficulty. They had gone back about a mile when they came to his tracks, and sure enough found where they turned from the road; then following the path a few yards, they were truly horrified at beholding the body in the position we have before described, hanging and partly wedged in between the little trees, against which, as was supposed, he must have leaned, and he was dead!

A careful examination soon revealed to these practical mountaineers the true state of the case, and also suggested to them what should be done. Two were to stay and watch the dead, to guard it against wild animals, while Charley returned to inform Mr. Wheeler of their melancholy discovery, and got him to send for the Coroner, and for a few of the nearest neighbors, to afford necessary assistance and relief.

"What is a Coroner, papa?" inquired little Jimmie.

"He is an officer appointed to investigate the cause and manner of every sudden and unaccountable death, and help to bring murderers to trial, etc."

"I thank you, papa," said Jimmie.

"Now go on," said Henry, "if you please. I want to know what they did with the poor man."

"And I want to know," said little Harriet, "what his wife said when she heard of it, and those poor little children; they had no father any more."

Mr. Tompkins continued: "It was a firm, perhaps a superstitious belief, of those simple mountaineers, that no human body, found dead, must be removed from the position in which it was found, or even touched, until the Coroner had held his inquest, as it is called, and given his certificate of verdict. This officer's residence, being twelve miles distant, he could not be brought before the following morning. Therefore, the men, who soon gathered, were organized, or arranged into watchers, by pairs, and reliefs to alternate every two hours, till the Coroner should arrive. This was found, after trial, when each pair had served one term, to become irksome, and at night the wind rose and blew cold, making it very uncomfortable, there in the snow, without shelter. Farmer Wheeler, who had from the first objected to this plan of leaving the body there in the woods so long, now resolutely insisted on having it brought to his house, where the watchers could be comfortably provided for while performing their neighborly and human kindness.

Notwithstanding the remonstrances,

suggested by the fears of this ignorant people, Mr. Wheeler's resolute counsels prevailed, and a litter was made of two long poles, with several cross-bars and boards on which they put some straw. The body of Jessie being placed upon this bier, as the litter is also called, it was lifted and carried by four men, two at each end, who were preceded by the farmer, carrying a lantern. On arriving at Diamond Valley Cottage, as the farmer's home was called, the corpse was laid in the parlor room, just as it was first found, without removing his clothing. There it was to be watched until the Coroner should come. That officer's name was Mr. Smith. He did not arrive till after midnight, and then deemed it best to defer his inquest till next day, as it would be difficult to collect men enough to form a jury before that to investigate the affair, and decide upon the cause of his death.

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Meanwhile, however, a messenger had been sent to bear the dreadful tidings of the sorrowing event to his poor widow Margaret. I need not attempt to depict the grief with which she was overwhelmed at this mournful intelligence. Early in the succeeding day, the stricken widow, with her face bathed in tears, entered the cottage of the Diamond Valley Home, and was conducted to the room where lay the remains of her loved Jessie. The scene that ensued is indescribable. Falling on her knees beside the corpse, Margaret was for a little time silent, but could not long repress her emotions; her pent up feelings soon found utterance in a loud, long piercing shriek, as she soliloquized: "Oh, Jessie! Jessie! my own Jessie! What shall I do? what shall I do? what shall I do?" repeating the same and similar ejaculations in lower and audible wail, for some time. Then she would take hold of his hand, and then his foot, and then his coat, caressing each, and addressing them successively in terms of most affectionate endearment, and declaring she could never live without her own loving husband.

The Coroner's inquest was held about noon, and the verdict rendered in accordance with the facts I have narrated, and then the corpse was removed to the widow's house, where the neighbors all around for miles, assembled the following day to the funeral. A clergyman came and improved the solemn occasion by a most impressive discourse, after which a long procession followed the remains to the burial ground near by the school-house in Johnsonstown, two till you find his tracks, and then follow them where they left the road, till you can learn something about him." All were agreed, and off they started immediately, not knowing but they might find poor Jessie in some serious difficulty. They had gone back about a mile when they came to his tracks, and sure enough found where they turned from the road; then following the path a few yards, they were truly horrified at beholding the body in the position we have before described, hanging and partly wedged in between the little trees, against which, as was supposed, he must have leaned, and he was dead!

Days, weeks and months passed before the widow's grief was sufficiently assuaged to allow her to talk of anything but her dear Jessie and his many virtues. But time will allay the deepest sorrow and blunt the bitterest anguish. My father soon after removed from Diamond Valley, and I never heard what became of Margaret and her little ones, but the scenes of that winter, will never be erased from my memory."

The devil's heartiest laugh is at a detecting witicism. Hence the phrase, "devilish good," has sometimes a literal meaning.

In the march of life, don't heed the order of "right about," when you know you are about right.—Holmes.

Is the average height of mean-size ranges, Switzerland does not begin to compare with Colorado, or, for that matter, with any Western territory. The mean height of the Alps is from 6,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea. The mean height of

Bloomfield.

Editors of the Bloomfield Gazette:

In looking over your paper last week I could not but think what a change has come over Bloomfield in the past three years, and when my friend, where I was visiting, took me to see the various improvements—some completed, and others in progress of completion—it seemed impossible it could be the Bloomfield I remembered of old.

Wide, beautiful avenues taking the place of narrow, ill-kept roads; flagged sidewalks, where, in times past, the passer's foot sank almost ankle deep in mud; fine houses erected in every direction; the horse railroad stretching like an artery from the heart of Newark and sending out its life-giving throbs of living freight every half hour, to the heart of Bloomfield.

Then, again, the lake, over whose frozen

surface the girls and boys dashed to the ring of the skater's steel, and, also, from those smiling faces in summer came numberless musketoes, has been swept away by the breath of advancing improvement, and its only waves now is the green grass, tosses by the autumn wind.

Then to think of Bloomfield actually publishing a paper, and a very interesting one at that, but the names of its accomplished editors is a sure guarantee for it in that respect, and I know it will achieve the success it so well deserves.